

Local committee presents awards to disabled APG employees

**Story and photo by
Mike Cast
DTC**
Two hearing-impaired

Aberdeen Proving Ground employees received accolades Oct. 20 for their accomplishments in the public sector.

The Harford County Committee on Employment presented this year's Harford County Employee of the Year



Thomas Martin conducts electromagnetic interference testing on radios and other electronic equipment used in systems such as tactical military vehicles.

Two retire during October ceremony

Yvonne Johnson
APG News

With 60 years of service to the nation between them, two seasoned Soldiers bid farewell to their military careers during a Retirement Ceremony at Top of the Bay Oct. 26.

Command Sgt. Maj. Larry D. Robinson, of the U.S. Army Developmental Test Command, and Chief Warrant Officer 5 Rodney K. Rollman, of the U.S. Army Materiel Command at Fort Belvoir, Va., were awarded the Legion of Merit as they ended their 30-year careers among family, friends and co-workers..

Brig. Gen. Michael L. Combest, commander of DTC, presided over the ceremony and award presentations.

Combest said that Robinson, as DTC's top noncommissioned officer, had "reached the pinnacle of our profession," and that his retirement was "an absolute commitment to our Soldiers and our Army come to fruition."

"On behalf of all of us, thank you for what you've done over 30 years for our Soldiers and for our Army," Combest said. "We are proud to have served with you and we are proud to have known you. I wish you the very best and thank you for your service. God speed."

Of Rollman, Combest said that as a logistician he had one of the "toughest and most thankless jobs in the Army."

"No matter how fast you get it there, it's never good enough," he said. "Anyone who can endure 30 years and 19 moves and serve with everything he has deserves a brilliant future. Thank you for your service and God speed."

The retirees also received the Department of the Army Certificate of Retirement and the Presidential Certificate of Appreciation.

Their spouses received the Department of the Army Certificates of Appreciation.

In addition, Combest presented Linda Robinson with the DA Civilian Award for Public Service and the command sergeant major presented flowers to his family members and his aide, Sgt. Joyce Chappell.

"APG has been great to me and my family," Robinson said. "I'm blessed to have had such a supporting wife and family."

Rollman, who served on APG from 1978 to 1982, said that he was grateful to his family who supported him as he made the transition from enlisted to warrant.

"It's been an honor to have worn the uniform," Rollman said.

Command Sgt. Maj. Larry D. Robinson

A native of Bainbridge, Ga., Robinson entered the Army in January 1975. His past assignments include Fort Hood, Texas; Camp Humphreys, Korea; Camp Casey, Korea; Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.; Germany, Operation Desert Shield/Storm, and Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz. Robinson completes his career as the command sergeant major of APG's U.S. Army Developmental Test Command.

His awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal (4 OLC), the Army Commendation Medal (2 OLC), the Army Achievement Medal (4 OLC), the Good Conduct Medal (9th award), the National Defense Service Medal with bronze service star, the Southwest Asia Service Medal, the Army Superior Unit Award and various service medals.

His plans include spending more time with his wife and sons, Jovonte and Larry.

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Rodney K. Rollman

Rollman was born in Newport, R.I., and graduated high school in Chester, Penn. He entered the Army in September 1975. His past assignments include Fort Hood, Texas; Korea, Saudi Arabia, APG, and the Philadelphia District Recruiting Command. He culminates his career as the senior supply technician with AMC, Fort Belvoir, Va.

His awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal (6th award), the Army Commendation Medal (5th award), the Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal (3rd award), Global War on Terrorism Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Korean Service Medal and Southwest Asia Medal.

Rollman's retirement plans include working in the logistics area and spending time with his wife and daughters, Jennifer and Christy.

Award for disabled public-sector employees to Thomas Martin, an electronics technician at the U. S. Army Aberdeen Test Center who has worked at APG for more than 15 years. The committee also presented this year's Harford County Merit Award for disabled public-sector employee to Michael Graziano of APG's Directorate of Information Management, who has worked at APG for nearly 19 years. Graziano earned the same award in 2004, as well as in 1995.

Both men are graduates of the Rochester Institute of Technology, a university in upstate New York that focuses on teaching disabled students and is also the home of the National Institute for the Deaf, a higher-learning center that strives to improve teaching and learning processes for deaf students.

Sharon Grzanka, the Harford County Committee on Employment coordinator for the awards program, spoke highly of both individuals.

"The committee meets and evaluates nominations, and they [were] all outstanding, but those of Mr. Martin and Mr. Graziano stood out."

Employee of the Year

Martin, who has "severe" deafness in his left ear and "profound" deafness in the right, began working at APG during his junior year of college in 1989. He was an engineering aide under a cooperative program between RIT and the Combat Systems Test Activity, ATC's forerunner organization. He began by helping with tests of large-cal-

iber weapons.

Martin returned to school after 10 weeks, but he had so impressed his supervisor that he was encouraged to come back to APG after he finished his senior year. Upon his return in 1990, Martin again got involved with large-caliber-weapons testing, becoming a test director with an office in the CSTA headquarters building. After seven years there, he transferred to the Electro-Magnetic Interference Test Facility in what is now known as ATC, where he works to determine the impact of electromagnetic interference on radios and other electrical equipment used in military systems such as tactical vehicles.

Col. John Rooney, commander, U.S. Army Aberdeen Test Center, saw the progress Martin was making in promoting support of disability programs and recommended him for this award.

"Throughout his 15 years of service with the U.S. Army Aberdeen Test Center, Mr. Martin has been a volunteer in promoting community enhancements and support of disability programs, both inside and outside of work," Rooney said in his letter of recommendation.

Martin has been deaf since birth, a condition his parents discovered when he was still quite young because they noticed he didn't respond to noises such as aircraft flying overhead. By the age of two he was wearing a "Body Aid" hearing device, an instrument with a box that is an actual hearing aid with a cord that

attaches it to a receiver in the ear.

It was a more cumbersome way to address his deafness than the miniaturized devices now available, he said, but it allowed him to hear various sounds for the first time.

"When I first had it on, I didn't understand what it was, and I kept taking it off. I couldn't speak at the time," he recalled. "It took time to get used to it."

His mother had once been a teacher, and she spent "so many hours" during his first 12 years of school helping him, Martin said. He learned to read lips during his early years, and his mother helped him with speech therapy, but he didn't learn sign language then. He attended a "regular" grade school, he said, and was treated like a "regular" student, adding that his teachers would forget he was deaf.

As he progressed through the grades however, he began to have trouble because most teachers weren't trained in sign language and often spoke to their students while facing the black board, making it impossible for Martin to read their lips. It was a problem that eventually drove down his grades.

"When I got older, before high school, that's when my grades started slipping because it was getting harder and the teacher would turn around to the blackboard," Martin recalled. "So my parents tried to figure out a way [to help him], and they thought about deaf school. I never had experienced it."

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First to graduate using APG/HCC agreement

Harford Community College

A former Child and Youth Services employee who came to Aberdeen Proving Ground from Germany in 2004 is the first to graduate from Harford Community College with an A.A.S. degree in Early Childhood Education.

Holly Curtsinger used credits through the new Aberdeen Proving Ground/Harford Community College Articulation Agreement. The A.A.S. in Early Childhood Education is part of the new HCCDirect program.

HCC signed an articulation agreement last October with APG Child and Youth Services. Under this agreement, child care providers working at APG who have completed specific learning experiences in the early childhood education child care industry program offered through APG Child and Youth Services will be eligible to receive a total of 21 articulated college credits from HCC applicable to the A.A.S. in Early Childhood Education.

To receive the articulated credit, APG child care workers must first complete three college-level credits with HCC. At that time, the child care worker can request a formal letter certifying completion of training through the CYS program be forwarded to Registration and Records at APG to request posting of the articulated credit.

Curtsinger completed her last courses at

HCC and also took advantage of the seven articulation courses. She also received credit for Field Placement I because she had achieved a Child Development Associate Credential. She worked in a Child Development Center to complete credits for Field Placement II.

"It is very hard for military spouses to complete college programs because of moving around all the time," Curtsinger said. "It is wonderful to find a program that works with the military. It was very rewarding."

"I was floored when I was told about the opportunity for me to work with APG's Articulation Agreement and how it would benefit me. Normally, I have run into negative situations. It was wonderful to come into a positive atmosphere at APG. I am very happy here."

To date, 16 CYS employees and FCC Providers have received an additional 21 hours of college credit based on a complete Individual Education Plan of Child Development training. The IEP consists of an 18-month foundation level child development education that is Child Development Associate based.

Curtsinger said that she plans to continue her education by pursuing a bachelor's degree.

Beverly Hartgrove, CYS, said that anyone who has previously completed the CYS training program can take advantage of the Articulation Agreement by calling a CYS trainer to get details.

APG News

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Soldier Show story next week



Photo by YVONNE JOHNSON

Framed by Pfc. Brady Sikorski of Fort Irwin, Calif., left, and Staff Sgt. Chaney Mosley, Georgia Army Reserve, right, 1st Lt. Brandy Culp of Fort Polk, La., center, sings Gretchen Wilson's "Red Neck Woman" during the 2005 U.S. Army Soldier Show at the Post Theater Oct. 30. See the Soldier Show story in next week's APG News.